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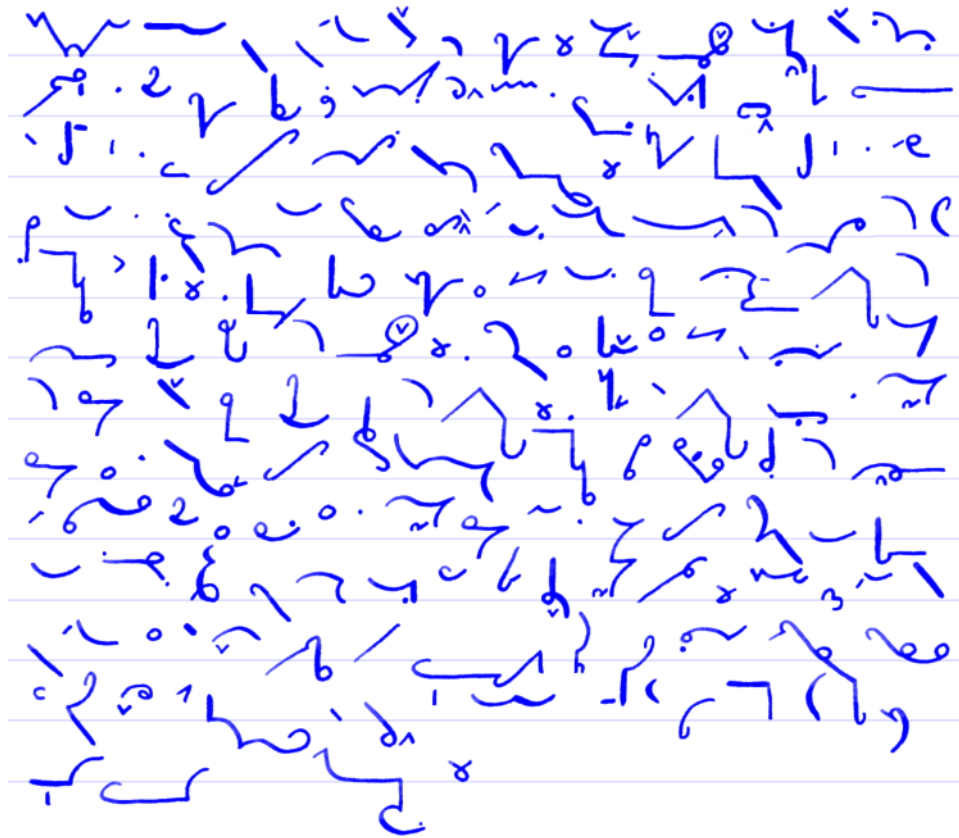
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PDF Date: 3 January 2025

Lined area for notes, consisting of multiple horizontal lines.



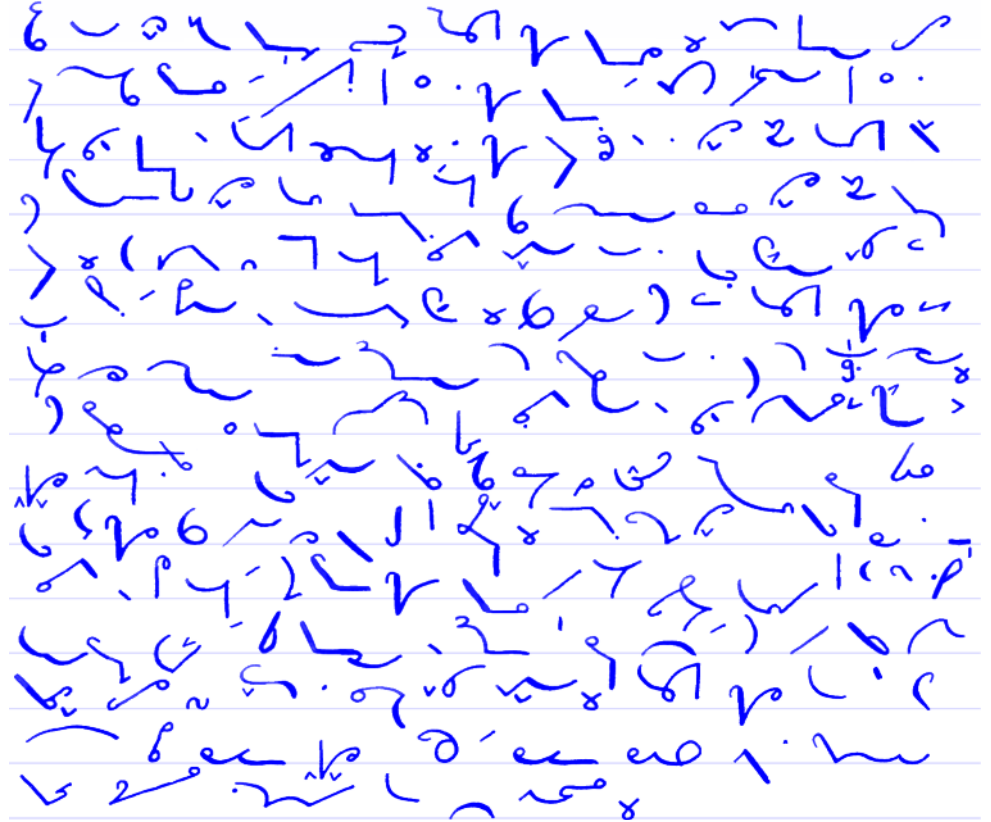
Facility Drills

I hope you are not* going to be put off by the word "drill". Unlike the exercises endured by army recruits, a shorthand drill does not consist of marching around a bleak parade ground at the crack of dawn on a cold winter morning before breakfast. On the contrary*, it can be done on a soft seat in a comfortable room in pleasant surroundings and need never interrupt your meals or other activities of the day. The dictionary definition of drill is: any* strict, methodical, repetitive or mechanical training, instruction or exercise. The verb is defined as: to impart knowledge or skill by strict training, discipline, or repetition. The idea of repetition to gain a manual skill is an obvious one for many other* activities, such as sports, dancing or music, and as long as shorthand is seen as a manual skill

and not an intellectual one, there should be no difficulty in accepting that this is the principal method needed in order to* achieve the desired result. I knew you would not be put off, as all my readers are quick witted, astute, shrewd, smart and perceptive persons with sharp minds and the determination to pounce on anything that will get them to their goal quickly and effectively.

* Omission phrases "I (h)ope you are not" "on (the) contrary" "many oth(er)" "in ord(er to)"

* "any" The dot vowel is not part of the short form, but can be added to help reading back



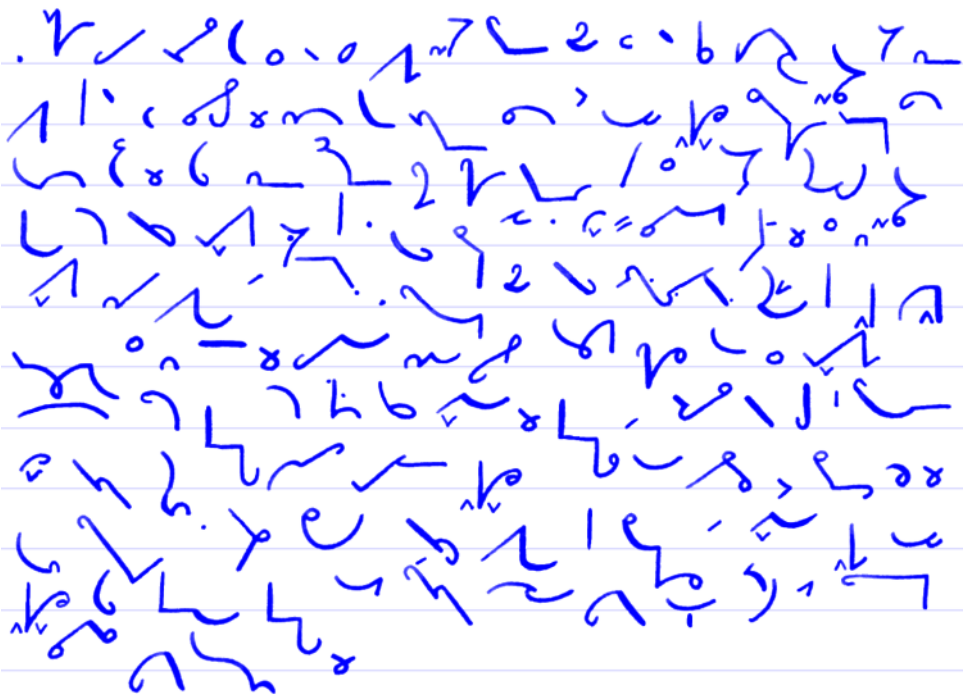
Facility Drills

With this in mind, I have begun the creation of facility drill booklets. I am taking one of each month's blogs and rewriting it as a drill book and also recording it as an additional slow dictation of 40 words a minute*. A drill page consists of a line of shorthand, followed by three blank lines for you to copy onto, thus making six lines of shorthand per page. They help you get into the habit* of writing in an even flowing style with no stopping and starting to interrupt the flow. This is the reason they are called facility drills. Facile means moving, acting, working or proceeding in an easy or unconstrained manner. Their specific purpose is to get the learner out of the habit* of slow laborious drawing of the outlines and into an even writing pace, and this skill is the foundation of future speed achievements, even though the drills

themselves are not meant to be done at high speed. Copying from the line above is not a good habit to settle into and so the blog drill books are only useful if you are at that particular stage, having completed the theory and just beginning to work on speed improvement, and so are best left behind once you have acquired a smooth style of writing Facility drills for all other matter, such as single outlines, phrases and single sentences, should be a permanent part of the shorthand writer's* armoury for improvement and increase.

* Omission phrases "words (a) minute" "short(hand) writer's"

* "habit" Always insert the first vowel, as this is similar to "hobby" which could also make sense

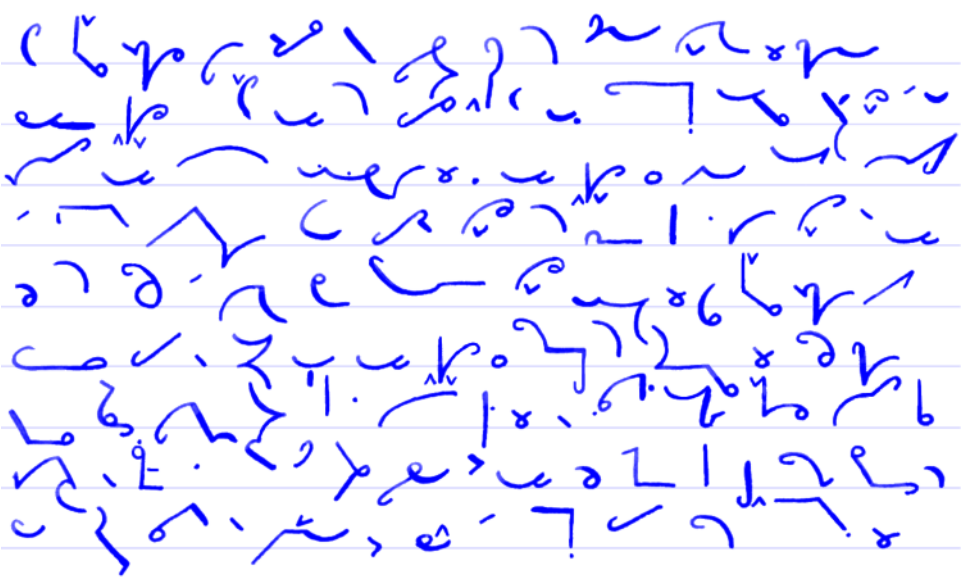


Facility Drills

The ideal way to use them is to first read the actual blog shorthand, with all its helpful vowels, until you can read it all without hesitation. You may have to practise some of the new outlines separately to get more familiar with them. Then you can work through the drill booklet, which has only the essential vowels, doing your best to write neatly at an even speed and with a light-handed touch. As you write, you are reading and copying the printed shorthand above, and preferably saying it out loud to yourself as you go. One thing* you should not use the facility drills for is to write the matter from dictation, or attempt fast writing. Dictations should always be done on blank lined paper, so that you learn to recall outlines in response to the spoken words. If you prepare a passage sufficiently* beforehand*, reading it several

times and writing out the new outlines, then taking dictation in the proper* manner will be no hardship and the correct habits will be formed.

- * Omission phrase "wu(n) thing"
- * "sufficiently" short form includes the "-ly" version, but an L stroke can always be added if needed, disjoined where necessary
- * "beforehand" Alternative outline
- * "proper" Always insert the first vowel, and the diphone in "appropriate" as these are similar in outline and meaning

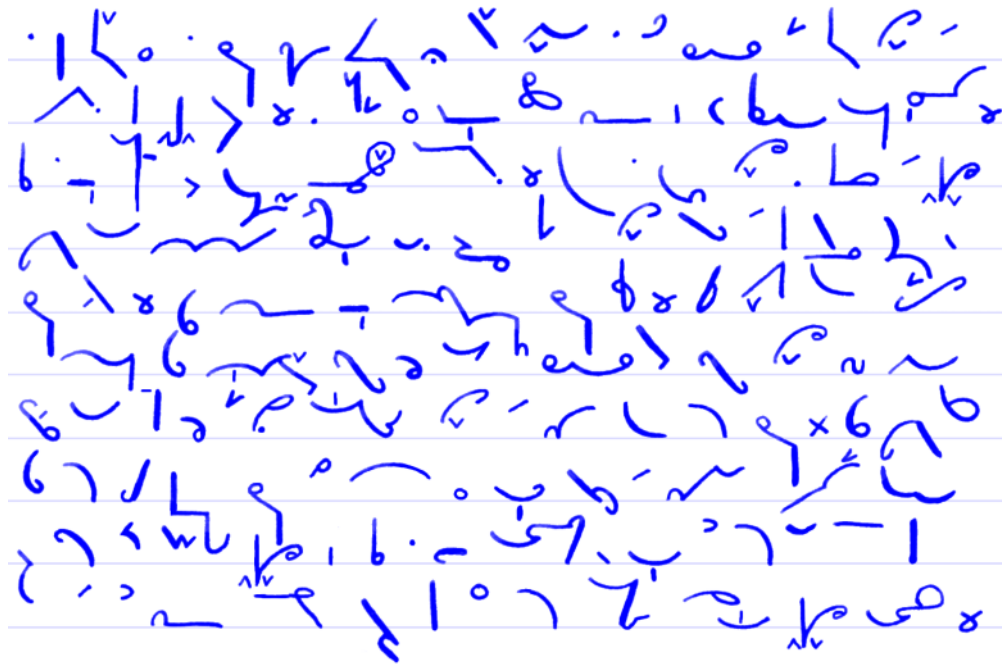


Facility Drills

Other types of drills will always be useful throughout your shorthand writing* life. Drilling single outlines, either new or ones that need correcting, enables both mind and hand to learn new matter intensively. The new outline is written in the margin and copied repeatedly along one or two* lines, or you can do a whole line of new words or phrases and leave several blank lines underneath. These types of drill are the quickest way to ensure no new outline

is forgotten or escapes. Phrase drill books of this kind will be made available at a later date. To consolidate knowledge of the items learned, it is helpful to construct a short passage using all the new words and take it down from the spoken word, in order to* establish the habit of reacting to the sound and getting away from copying.

- * Omission phrases "short(hand) writing" "one (or) two" "in ord(er) to"



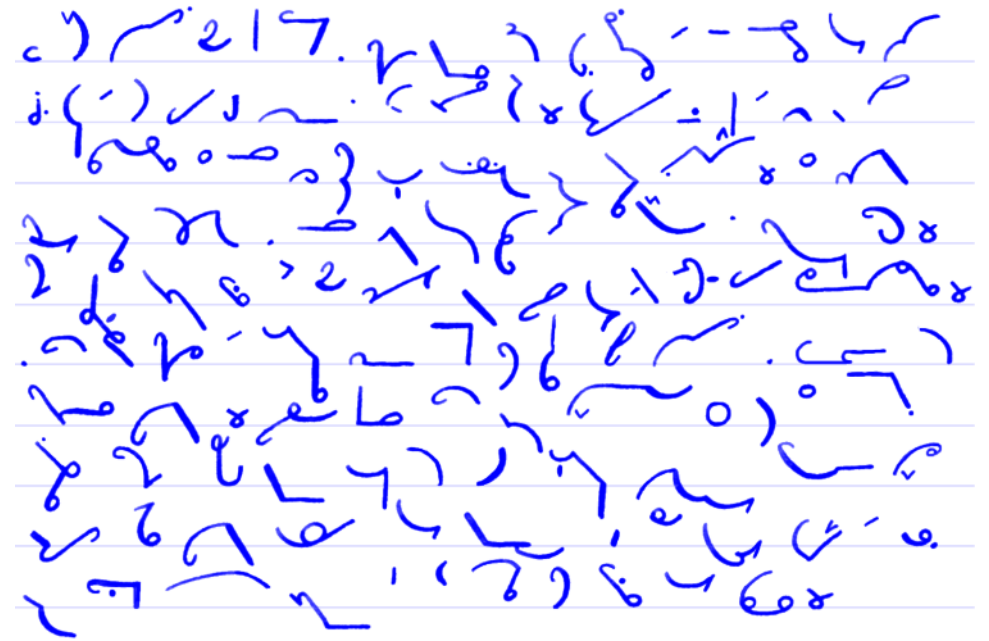
Facility Drills

A different type is a speed drill which can be made by writing a short sentence on the top line and repeating it down the page. The idea is to go as fast as you can but without descending into scrawl. It is a good antidote to the visual exercises of copying. After a few lines the text and outlines will be in memory and there is no need to glance at the line above and it becomes easier to speed up. These make good impromptu* speed tests. Just write for one minute then multiply the number of words in the sentence by the number of lines you have written, plus any odd words on the

last unfinished line, and you will have your speed. This will be faster than your general dictation speed as the matter is known beforehand* and you are not really having to think very hard about the outlines, but it is a great encourager to know what your hand can do and what you can expect to be able to do as your knowledge of the most common outlines increases.

* impromptu" Omits the lightly-sounded P, so uses M and not Imp

* "beforehand" Alternative outline



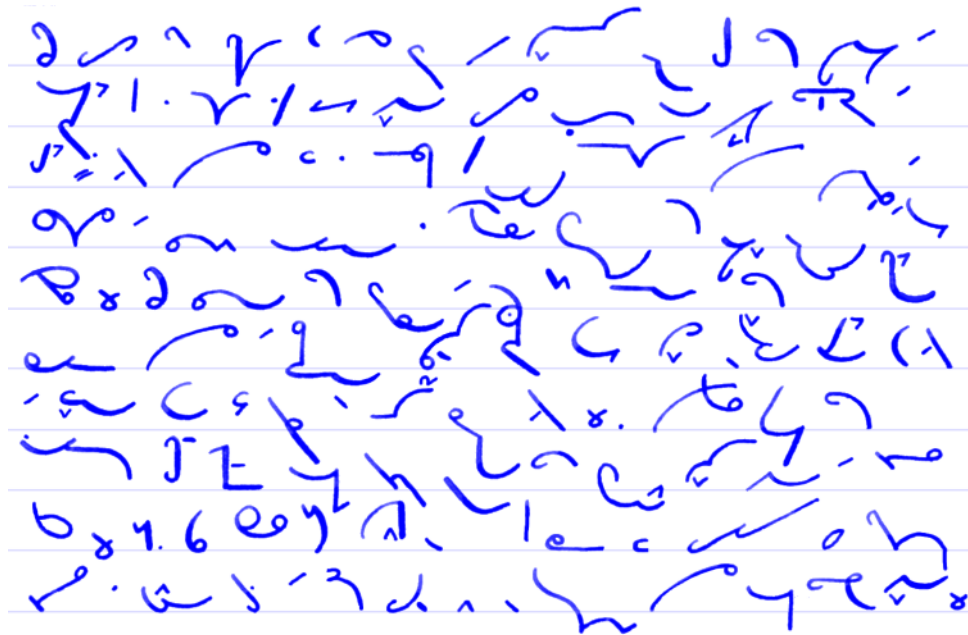
Facility Drills

When I was learning shorthand at college the drill books were thin, sparse and quite expensive for the little contents they had and so we did not make a lot of use of them. They were eked out and made to last as long as possible*, as cost meant there was no incentive to fill the pages rapidly. As you will be printing the pages yourself, the cost should be far less than* buying a printed version. They are the "disposable paper plates" of the shorthand world, to be used, filled up and thrown away as quickly as possible*. The more drills and notepads you can get through at this stage of learning, the quicker your progress will be.

Using text more to your liking is as easy as copying passages from the instruction book into your usual notepad, leaving the blank lines between, and this will be necessary for the beginner who has not finished the theory and needs to have graded matter to practise on that matches their place in the lessons.

* Omission phrases "as long as poss(ible)" "as quickly as poss(ible)"

* "less than" Downward L to make a good join



Facility Drills

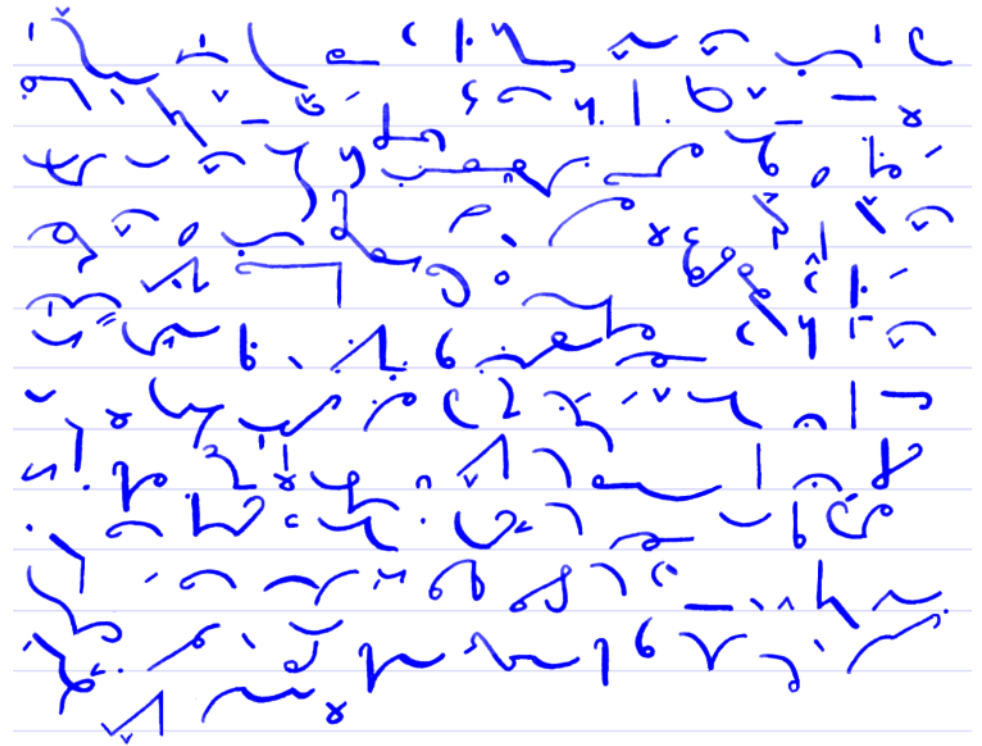
There is one particular drill that most people are likely to have done very willingly and enjoyably at an early age, writing one's name in real grown-up and joined-up letters, with an extra large initial capital letter, loops and swirls, and somehow including a magnificent flourish or underline to finish off the masterpiece*. There is something very pleasing and irresistible about going from drawing single letters and struggling slowly along the line, to finally joining them up and gliding along, with the possibility* of actually speeding up. The letter forms change from angular, drawn and dug into the paper to being* more fluent, lightly written and of course faster. I

did this as soon as I was allowed to at school, when we were first permitted to use a fountain pen and were shown how to form the letters into cursive writing.

* There are a few outlines that have a stroke following the loop, see www.long-live-pitmans-shorthand.org.uk/theory-5-loops.htm#ster-loop

* "possibility" Optional contraction

* "to being" Derivative of the short form phrase "to be"



Facility Drills

On arriving home after school that day, I began writing my name on every scrap of paper I could find and discovered that the more I did it, the faster I could go. Unfortunately* in my enthusiasm I was inexcusably careless in those first attempts and misspelled* my first name, transposing the last two letters. When this was pointed out by my Mum, I wrote the correct version as many times as possible that day, and in the following days, to eradicate this embarrassing mistake that I had taught my hand to do. Fortunately no-one else ever saw the error and I never made it again, the drills worked! Next time* you write your signature, it may deserve a bit more admiration, with never a variation or

mistake in its flawless formation and more importantly not the slightest hesitation or thought given to how it should be written, obviously the result of unconscious drilling and perfecting during those early years of learning to write longhand. (1438 words)

* "unfortunately" Optional contraction

* "misspelt" has an upward halved L

* Omission phrase "ne(k)s(t) time"

Download the Facility Drill Book PDFs at: www.long-live-pitmans-shorthand.org.uk/blogspot-downloads.htm

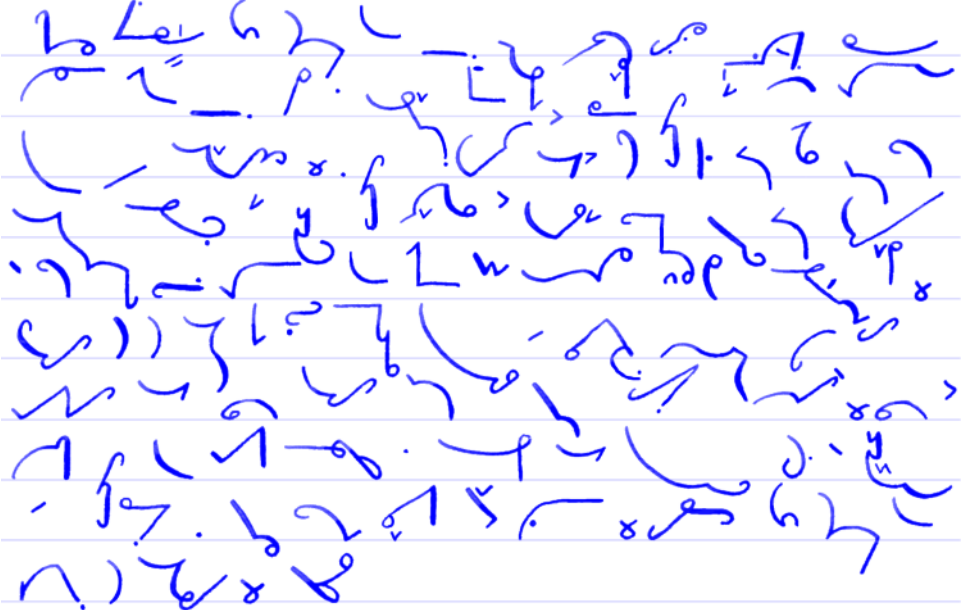


Short Letters 3

Dear Mr Green, I am writing to thank you for responding to the survey form in our recent mailout to local businesses. As you know, we are acting on behalf of the local authority, who wish to gauge the effectiveness of their recent improvements to community facilities and grants available, as well as future plans to solve some of the transport problems in the area. We are grateful for you taking the time to provide this information which will be a great help in formulating further improvements and so

creating a better environment for future growth of trade in the area, as well as protection for community resources for residents and visitors. A summary of the results of this survey will be made available on our website under the project reference given above and we think you will find the information of interest and benefit to your business. Yours sincerely* (150 words)

* Omission phrase "Yours (sin)cerely"



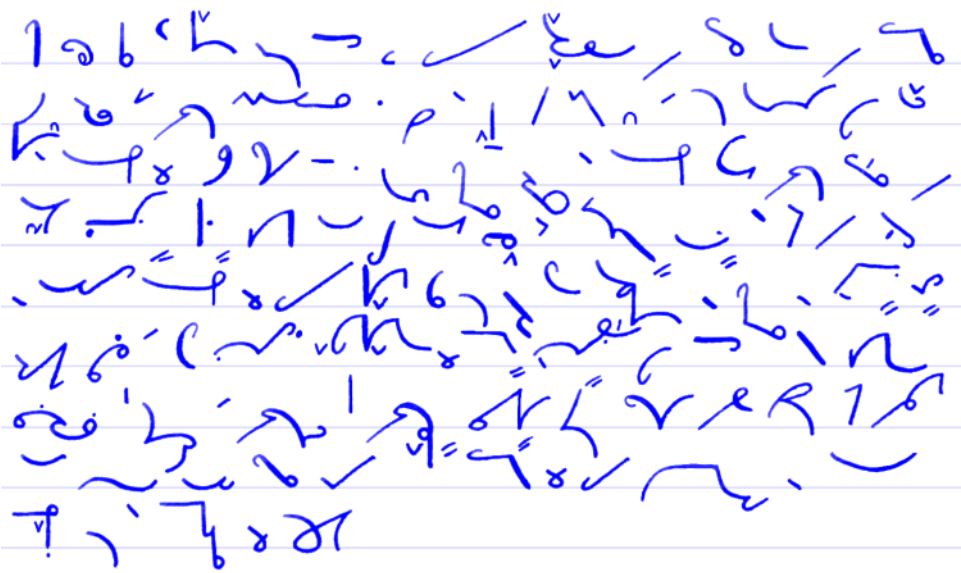
Short Letters 3

Dear Miss Jackson, Thank you so much* for coming to visit the Riverside Wetlands Ecology Centre last week* and for giving such an inspiring talk to the school children on the importance of looking after our environment. The children thoroughly enjoyed their day here, and thanks to your very informative explanation on the identification and lives of the various creatures to be found here, they were all very eager to look for and talk about the animals as they explored the site. Everyone was so enthusiastic at the craft activities afterwards, and hopefully many of them will want to return in the summer for one of your bird watching mornings. Some of the

older children have already expressed an interest in the afternoon session of identifying and sketching the birds from the hide by the lake. Once again*, thank you so much for helping us in this way. Best wishes* (150 words)

* "so much" In full, in order to join the phrase

* Omission phrases "las(t w)eek" "wu(n)s again"est wishes" Upward Ish in order to join this phrase

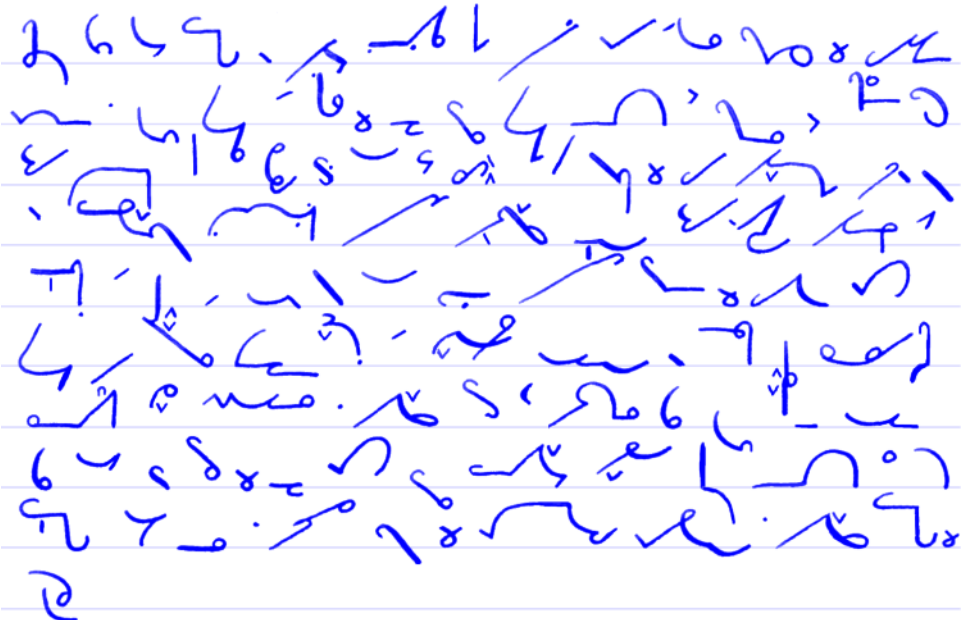


Short Letters 3

Dear Friends, It is that time of year again when we are finalising our plans for our Club's schedule of events on the river and I enclose a list of outings which I hope* you and your family will find of interest. As usual there are quite a few trips to places of interest along the river, plus our annual Gala Day held in June in the grounds of the Harbour Inn, all of which are open to anyone interested. We are delighted this year to be able to offer for the first time* two trips to Rocky Island to watch the seals and other marine wildlife. Captain Morrison will again be holding seminars on

seamanship and river craft at Riverside Hotel, which were very well* received last year and which resulted in many new members to our Club. We look forward* to another exciting year of activities. Yours sincerely (150 words)

- * Omission phrases "I (h)ope" "for (the) first time" "very (w)ell" "look fo(r)ward" "Yours (sin)cerely"
- * "Rocky" Insert last vowel, as it could also be "Rock" and context does not help



Short Letters 3

Dear Sir, Thank you for the quotation to rebuild the garages at the rear of our office premises. We would like to make a few changes and additions. Could you please change the colour of the bricks to the darker version that we looked at, as this would blend in with the surroundings much better. We require the roof to be of glass fibre laminate rather than the rubberised coating that we originally requested, and the guttering and downpipes should now be in grey rather than black. We have also

changed our electrical wiring and lighting requirements, including two extra outside sensor controlled security lights, and I enclose a revised plan that reflects this, if you could include this in the building plans. Could you also please clarify the rising door colour, as your quotation only gives a reference number. I look forward* to receiving a revised quotation. Yours faithfully (150 words)

- * Omission phrase "look fo(r)ward"



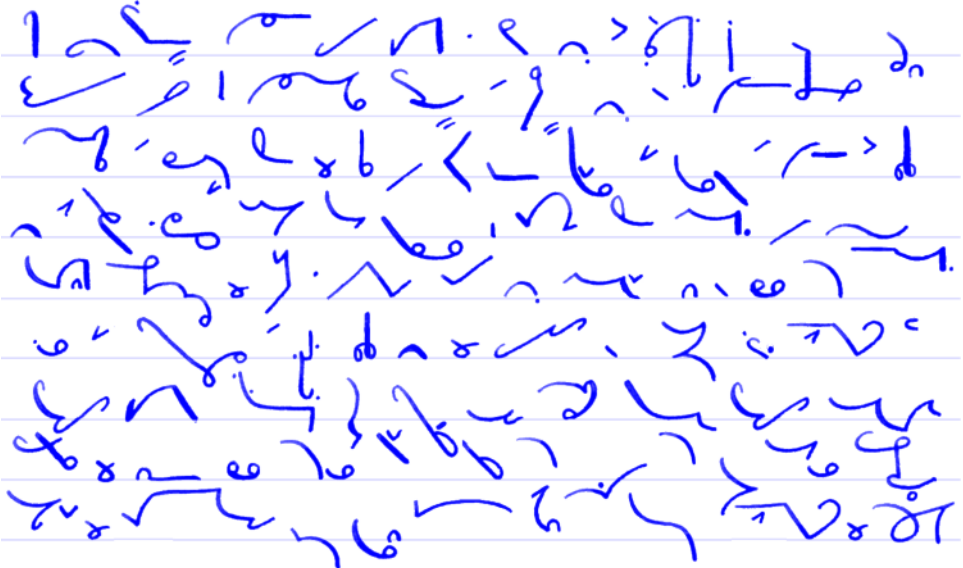
Short Letters 3

Dear Mrs Bolton, I am writing to enquire if you have any vacancies for student placements or internships at your college. We have a number of business studies students and graduates on our books who are very keen to gain experience and use their skills in a commercial college environment. We specialise in finding placements for high achieving students who have made a firm career decision and wish to benefit both themselves and their hosts. We vet all our applicants very carefully, with extensive* testing, interviewing and taking up multiple references on ability and

character. They are used to working hard and are keen to learn. If you are interested in helping these students in their careers, as well as gaining some useful extra temporary staff for your busy periods, then please contact me with the types of subjects that you would like our students to help with. Yours sincerely (150 words)

* "extensive" Keep the T clearly vertical, as it could look like "expansive" which has a similar meaning

* Omission phrase "Yours (sin)cerely"

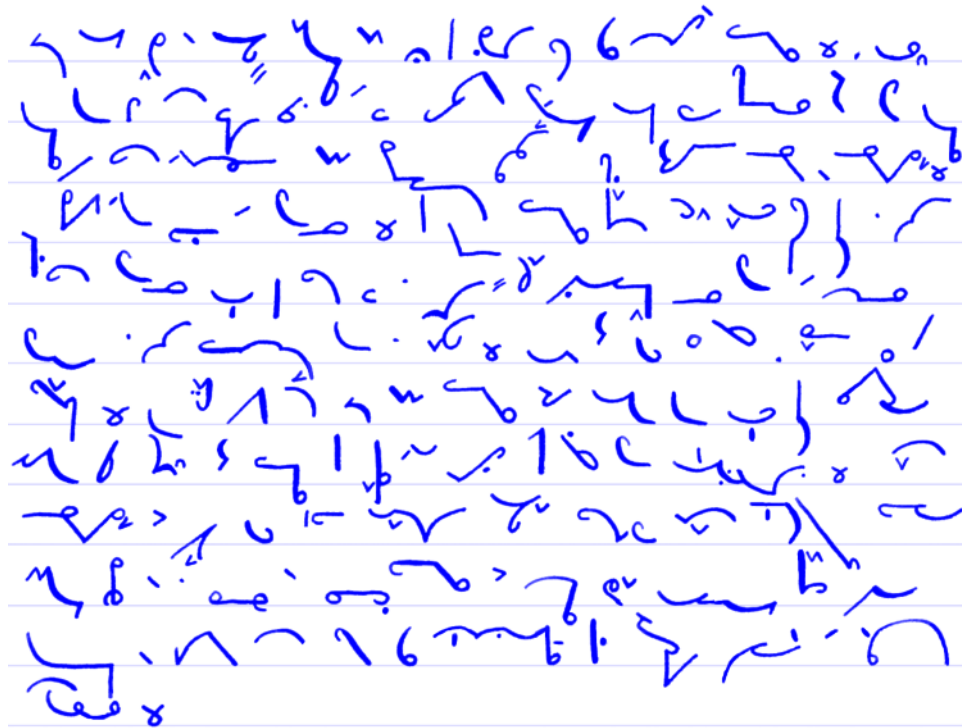


Short Letters 3

Dear Mr Black, Last week we held a special meeting of the Consultative Committee to discuss the issues that were raised at last month's Planning and Strategy meeting of local managers and senior staff. It is our job to give advice on the feasibility and legality of the decisions made, and the possible consequences not only for the business but also the staff and indeed our many valued customers. I attach a report of our meeting and invite you to send us your candid comments on the proposals and tentative decisions made. We want to

ensure complete cooperation with everyone who will be affected, so that the proposed new measures benefit everyone involved in our business. You can send us your comments by post or email, or fill in the comments questionnaire online. I look forward to your views on the matter* and thank you for your cooperation. Yours sincerely* (150 words) (Total 900 words)

* Omission phrased "on (the) matter" "Yours (sin)cerely"



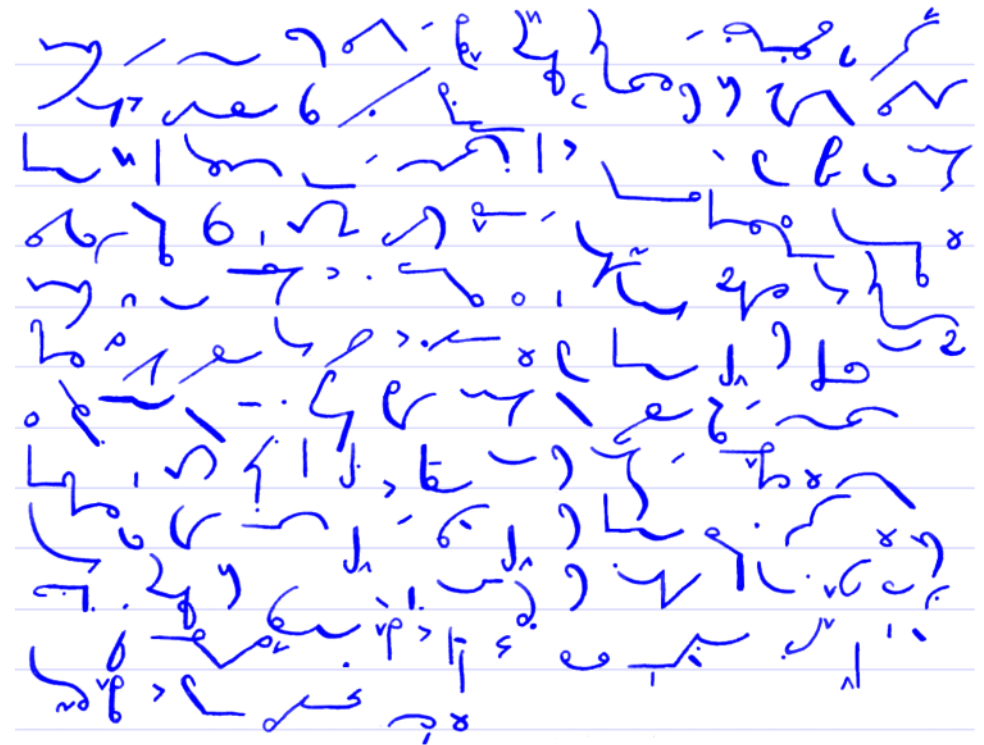
Solar Eclipse

Here in the South of England I have just about made it safely through this morning's eclipse. The news feeds have told me when it will "hit" and when we will be "plunged" into near darkness, although other feeds are more optimistic about the "spectacular celestial* treat" that we can expect to experience. Today started off grey and overcast. At peak eclipse time, around 9.30, it was a little more overcast, no different from when a middle-sized rain cloud comes over and makes everything a little gloomier for a while. Now that the event has passed, the sky is much brighter. If I had not* read or heard about the eclipse, I would never have known it was happening and would

have just assumed that the clouds had decided not to rain and had passed over uneventfully. My experience of the real event occurred entirely online, from the comfort of my cosy computer corner, and I have the satisfaction of a succession of screen grabs of the images supplied, including the diamond ring effect, to help me remember this momentous day of planetary, lunar and solar magnificence.

* "celes(t)ial" Omits the T

Needs the dots, as this is the same outline as "I do not"



Solar Eclipse

I am sure there* are many very happy and satisfied scientists, astronomers and stargazers who have really enjoyed witnessing this rare spectacle with their own eyes, and they will be happily talking about it for some time* to come, and marvelling at all the pictures of every stage of the event, not only the heavenly bodies themselves but also the weather, sky and visual atmospheric effects. I am sure you know exactly what an eclipse is but having the shorthand outlines for the astronomy terms is the real reason for the rest of the article. However, taking down their discussions in shorthand is possibly going to be quite a challenge, as they will not only be using all these and many more technical terms*, but also chattering at ten to the dozen in their enthusiasm and excitement. Maybe after the event they will calm down and slow down their talking

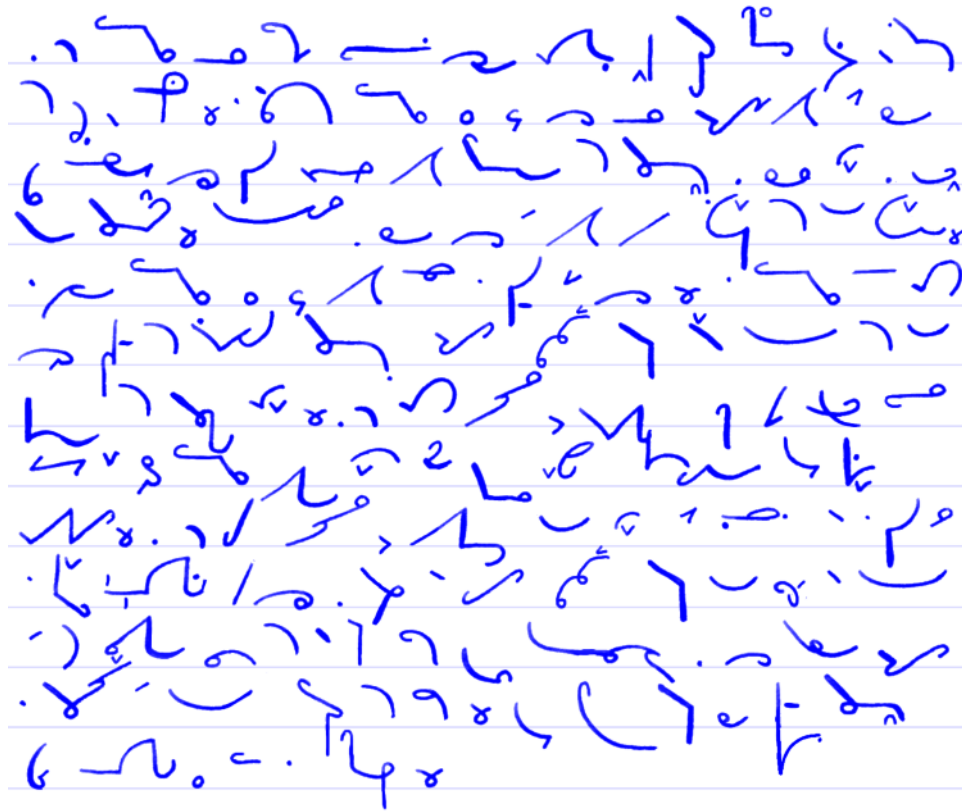
speed a little. To their credit, the scientists I was listening to did in fact* cease their commentary for a while, in order to* let viewers just experience the sight of the totality, with the sun's* corona shining out on all sides of the black circle of the moon.

* "for some time" Halving for the T of "time"

* "I am sure there" Doubling for "there"

* Omission phrases "tech(n)ical terms" "in ord(er) to" "in (f)act"

* "sun's" Normally it is advisable to insert vowels to distinguish between sun/snow and sunny/snowy but the context here makes that unnecessary



Solar Eclipse

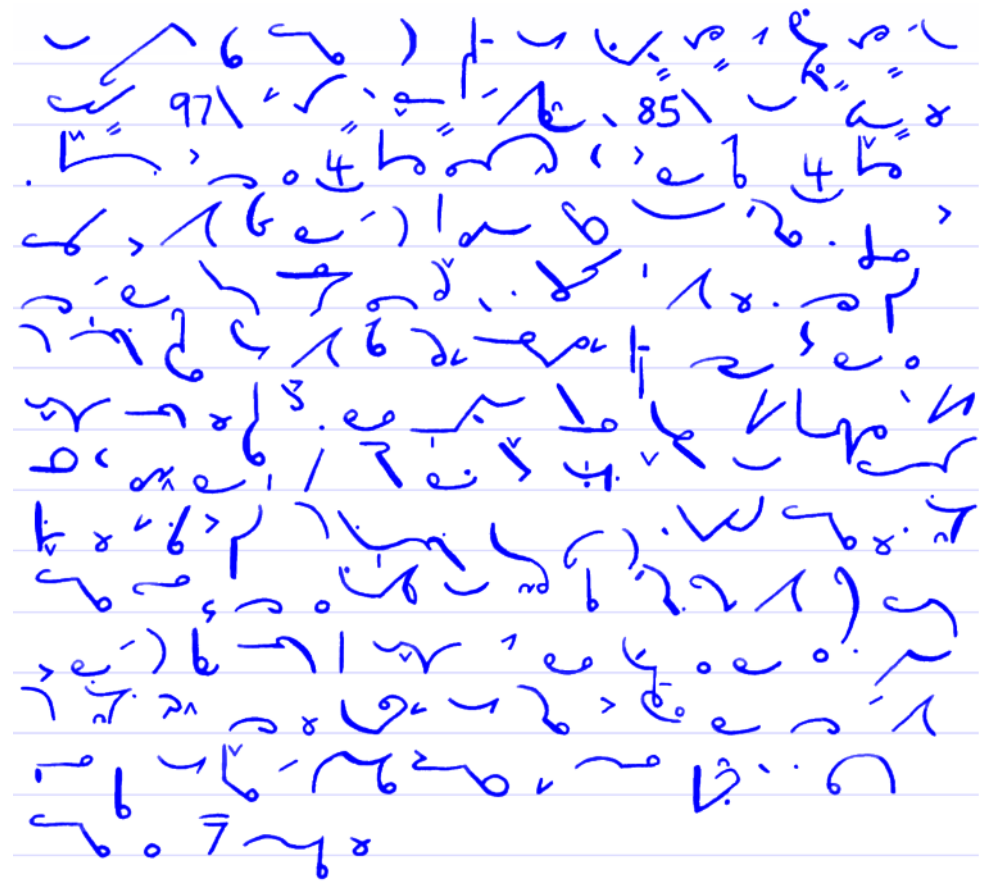
The word eclipse comes from the Greek meaning to leave out, abandon, darken, fail to appear or cease to exist. A solar eclipse is when the moon comes between the earth and the sun, thus causing the moon's shadow to cross the earth, blocking or obscuring the sun's light, the noun being obscuration. In other words*, the sun, moon and earth are aligned*, or in alignment*. A lunar eclipse is when the earth casts a shadow on the moon. An eclipse can also mean the total or partial obscuring of one celestial body by another, or any dimming or obstruction of light. The word also refers to the period of time during which the phenomenon* occurs: I spent the eclipse reading my shorthand books, whilst waiting for the daylight to return. The word generally refers to the reduction in light and the casting of a

shadow and is a type of occultation, which means the passage of one celestial body in front of another, and so hiding some or all of it from view, for example, the moon passing between an observer and another planet or star. If the further body is not totally obscured, then the occultation is called a transit.

* "in other words" Doubling to represent "other"

* "align, aligned, alignment" Downward L in order to indicate a preceding vowel, therefore cannot take an N hook

* "phenomenon" Optional contraction, plural "phenomena" is the same but omitting the N hook



Solar Eclipse

In Europe, this eclipse was total in the Faroe Islands and the Svalbard Islands off Norway, 97 percent on the Isle of Skye, and reducing to 85% in London. The diameter of the moon is 400 times smaller than that of the sun, and it is 400 times closer to earth than the sun, and so at certain places in their orbits, the disks of the moon and sun appear exactly the same size to an observer on earth. The moon's shadow or umbra travels over the earth, and those areas experience totality, meaning that the sun is entirely covered. At this point, the sun's corona becomes visible, which are tendrils of charged gases that surround the sun but which cannot be seen by the unaided eye in normal daylight. On

the edges of the shadow or penumbra, viewers will see a partial eclipse. An annular eclipse occurs when the moon is farthest in its orbit from the earth, therefore nearer to the sun, and so does not cover it entirely, and the sun's photosphere is seen as a ring or annula around the moon. Variations in the orbits of the sun, moon and earth cause differences in the types and lengths of eclipses, but the maximum duration of a solar eclipse is seven and a half* minutes.

* "seven and a half" For more ways to write fractions see www.long-live-pitmans-shorthand.org.uk/vocabulary-numbers.htm#fractions



Solar Eclipse

The word eclipse is also used figuratively to mean a reduction or loss of splendour, status or reputation and, as a verb, to make less outstanding or less important by comparison. I can truthfully say that shorthand, when written correctly and legibly, totally eclipses and surpasses the lesser glories of longhand, and maybe as a shorthand writer*, your presence in the interview waiting room, or your application on the top of the pile, will entirely eclipse the other applicants who have not studied and achieved your level of expertise. The

most recent eclipse in the UK was in August 1999, and we will have to wait until 2026 for the next one, which will be a partial eclipse. The next total eclipse will be in 2090, so please practise and perfect your shorthand and pass it on to your children so that they can create a blog to write about that one, as it is possible that I may not be writing shorthand articles at the age of 137 years. (976 words)

* Omission phrase "short(hand) writer"



Proverbs Reclaimed

Common proverbs are a very easy and brief way of passing on wisdom or advice that one has not had to come up with all on one's own. They are on permanent* standby, ready to help the speaker summarise their opinion in just a few words. They are a type of verbal shorthand, but probably more used in casual speech than in writing, because of their tendency to be overused. They are not the answer, just an opportunity for the listener to decide which one matches most closely what they

actually feel about the situation. Should I look before I leap, or is he who hesitates really lost? Is nothing ventured nothing gained the best way or maybe it is better to be safe than sorry. I ought not to cross my bridges until I get to them, but maybe if I fail to plan, I am planning to fail.

* "permanent" See www.long-live-pitmans-shorthand.org.uk/distinguishing-outlines-2-rule.htm "prominent permanent pre-eminent"



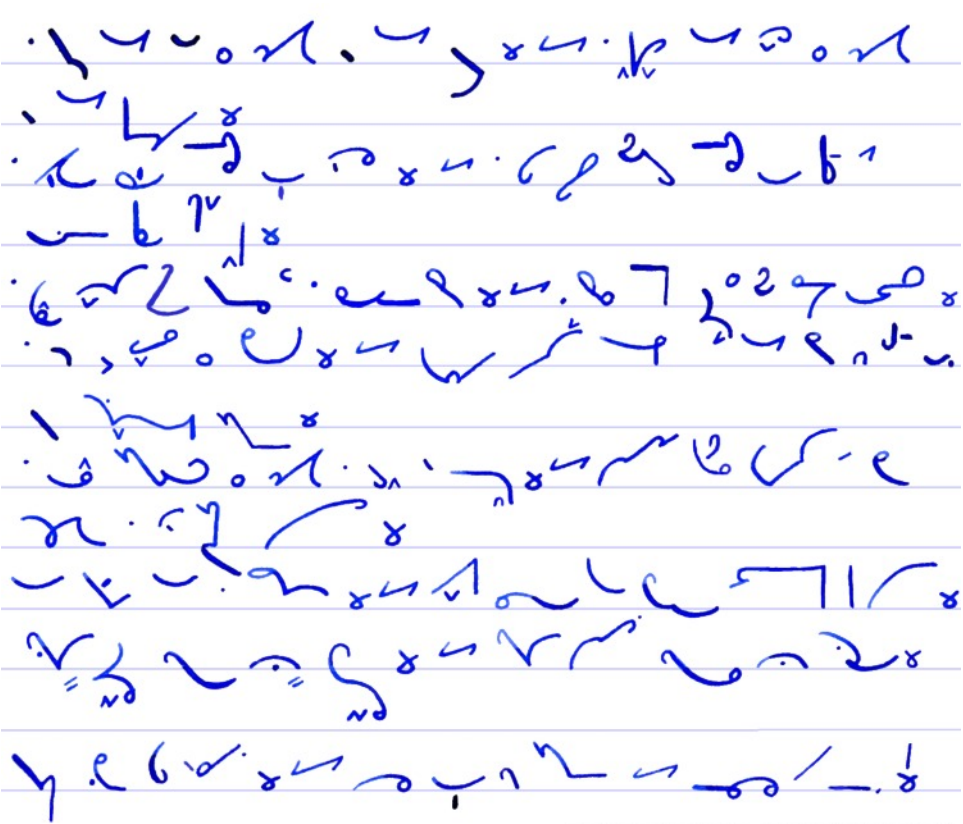
Proverbs Reclaimed

For the shorthand writer*, the most relevant point about proverbs, clichés and common phrases of all kinds is the fact that* you know them so well, that it is easy to write down what you think was said. They come in many slightly different versions, or the speaker may even choose to mangle it for their own purposes. Lazy listening is an insidious trap for the shorthand writer*, quite separate from the task of recalling and forming outlines, and if you need a proverb for that, maybe it is "Many a slip 'twixt cup and lip" or, translated* for the stenographer, "Many a

slip between sound heard and written word". Although proverbs are often criticised as being trite, they would never have survived if they were blatantly false or wrong. So, instead of cringing next time* you are confronted with one, it might be preferable to apply it to shorthand and get some fresh use out of it. After all, waste not, want not!

* Omission phrases "short(hand) writer" "is the (f)act that" "ne(k)s(t) time"

* "tra(n)slated" Omits the N



Proverbs Reclaimed

A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush. An outline in the mind is worth two in the dictionary.

A rolling stone gathers no moss. A well-used shorthand pen gathers no dust and the ink does not dry out.

A thousand mile journey begins with a single step. The steps get easier as shorthand skill increases.

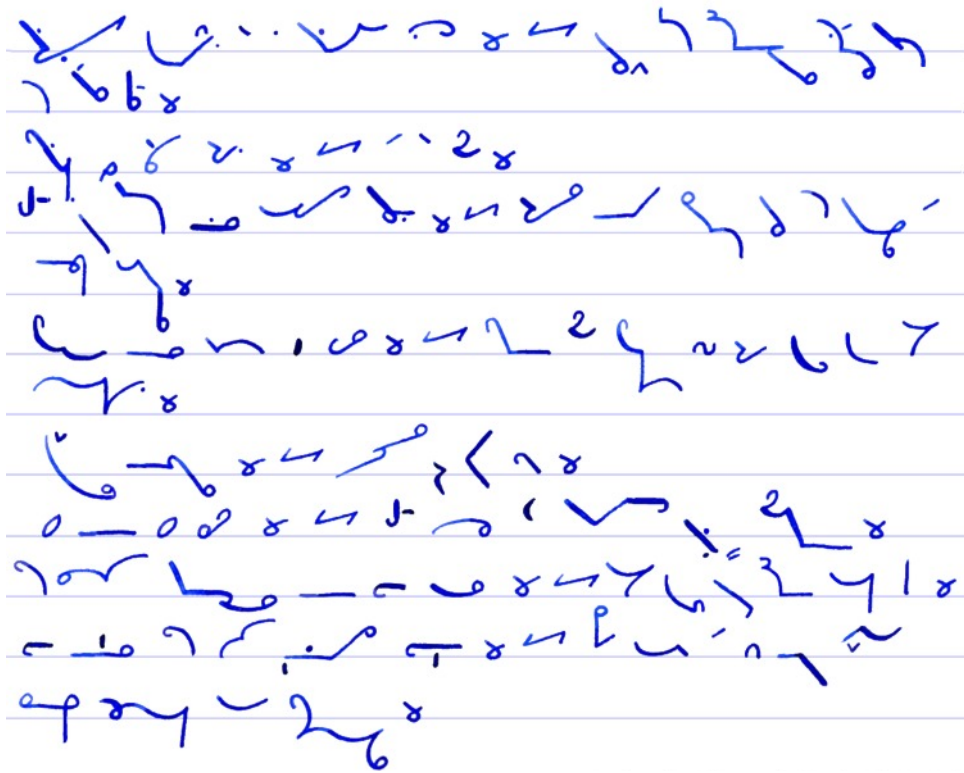
A word to the wise is sufficient. If you are really interested in the subject, you don't need to be reminded to practise.

An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Learn the short forms thoroughly and save yourself a lot of trouble later on.

Any port in a storm. Write something for everything and correct it later.

April showers bring May flowers. April learning brings May earning.

Better safe than sorry. Miss no opportunity to practise exams are coming!



Proverbs Reclaimed

Beware the fury of a patient* man. Pounce on your workplace errors before your boss does.

Brevity is the soul of wit. And of shorthand.

Don't put all your eggs in one basket. Always carry spare pens or pencils and extra notepads.

Everything comes to him who waits. Practise shorthand every time you have to wait, even if only mentally.

Finders keepers. Refers to that job opportunity.

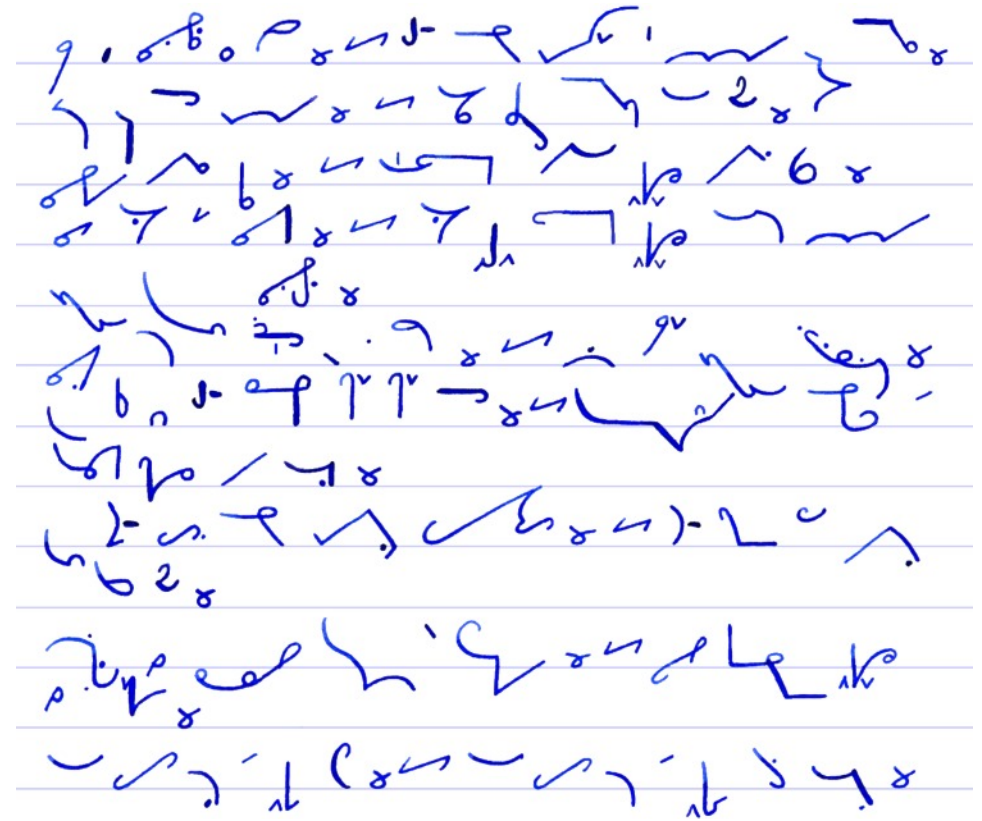
First come, first served. Don't miss that bargain Ebay shorthand book.

From small beginnings come great things. Only if you put the work into it.

Great oaks from little acorns grow. Start now and you could be writing 60 words a minute* in three months.

* "patient" See www.long-live-pitmans-shorthand.org.uk/distinguishing-outlines-6-care-o-z.htm "passionate patient"

* Omission phrase "words (a) minute"



Proverbs Reclaimed

He who hesitates is lost. Don't expect to rely on memory to fill gaps.

Here today, gone tomorrow. Unless it has been captured in shorthand.

History repeats itself. Uncorrected* wrong outlines repeat themselves.

Hit the nail on the head. Nail down the correct outlines in your memory to prevent future hesitation.

Hitch your wagon to a star. Aim high to prevent complacency.

If at first* you don't succeed, try, try again.
- Vocabulary extension and facility drills are needed.

If you sow the wind expect to reap the whirlwind. Sow practice in order to* reap fast shorthand.

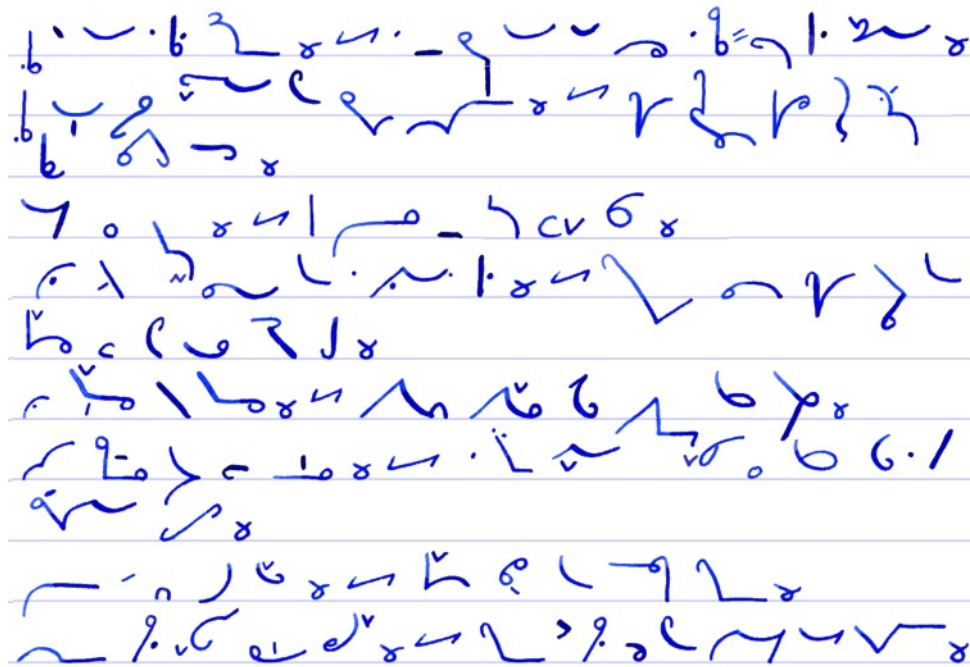
Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. Use the textbook* outlines as the ideal.

In one ear and out the other. In one ear and out of the pen nib.

* "uncorrected" Insert the first vowel, so it is not misread as "incorrect"

* Omission phrases "at (fir)st" "in ord(er to)"

* "textbook" Omits the second T

**Proverbs Reclaime**

It's all in a day's work. A good speed in hand means a stress-free day of shorthand writing*.

It's no use crying over spilt* milk. Drill troublesome outlines so that the error does not happen again.

Knowledge is power It looks good on your CV as well.

Lay up something for a rainy day. Prepare some drill pages for times when other things cannot be done.

Let bygones be bygones. Review, revise and then retake the fast passage.

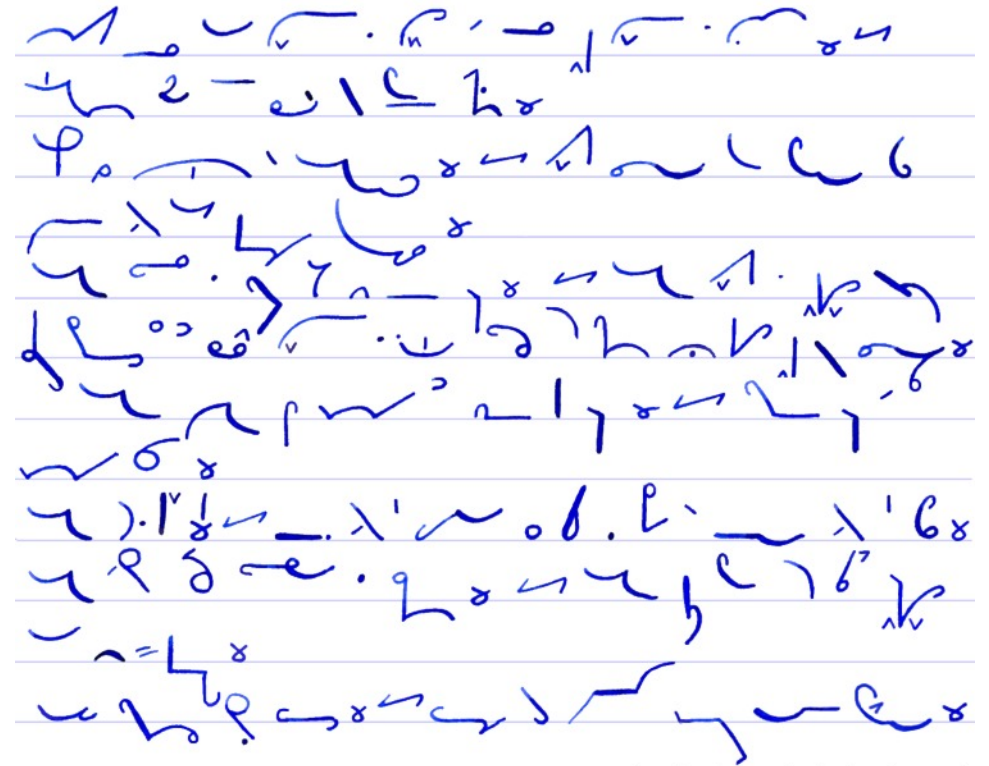
Little strokes fell great oaks. A compact writing style is faster than a large sprawling one.

Look and you shall find. Time slots for extra practice.

Make hay while the sun shines. Practise all the Hay words over lunch in the park.

* Omission phrase "short(hand) writing"

* "spilt" Note that "spilled" has a downward thick Ld stroke

**Proverbs Reclaimed**

March comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb. Unfamiliar shorthand can soon be overcome and tamed.

Necessity is the mother of invention. Write something for everything, then look up in the dictionary afterwards.

Never cross a bridge until you come to it. Never write an outline before it has been spoken, as what sounds like a common phrase or term may turn out to be something else.

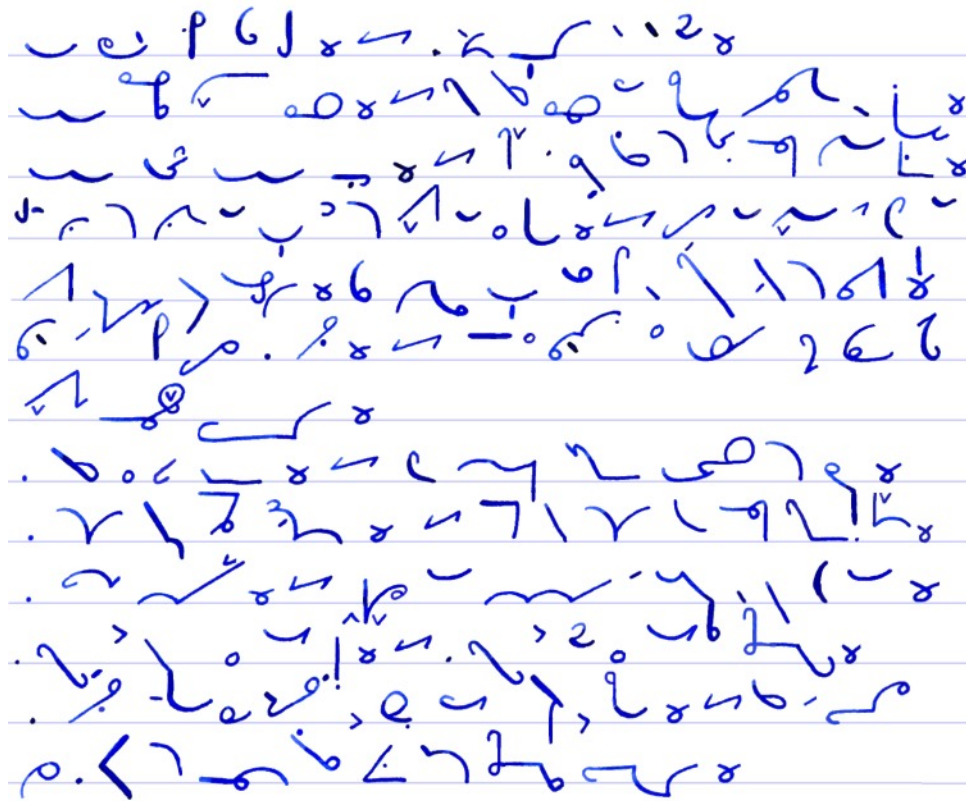
Never leave till tomorrow what you can do today. Practise today and tomorrow as well.

Never say die! Giving up on one thing* is just the start of giving up on others.

Never swap horses crossing a stream. Never dither over your choice of outline in mid-dictation.

New brooms sweep clean. Clean the pen regularly to keep the ink flowing.

* Omission phrase "wu(n) thing"



Proverbs Reclaimed

No sooner said than done. The ultimate goal of all shorthand.

Nothing succeeds like success. Remember past successes in order to* strengthen the resolve to continue.

Nothing ventured, nothing gained. Try a super fast or an extra long take.

Don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing. One hand writing and the other hand ready to turn the page instantly. This leaves no hands at all to prop up your head!

Slow and steady wins the race. Go as slowly as necessary through* the lesson and then write the exercises quickly.

The best is yet to come. Every minute of practice increases your speed.

The early bird catches the worm. Get up early for extra practising time.

The more the merrier. Outlines in memory and notepads to put them in.

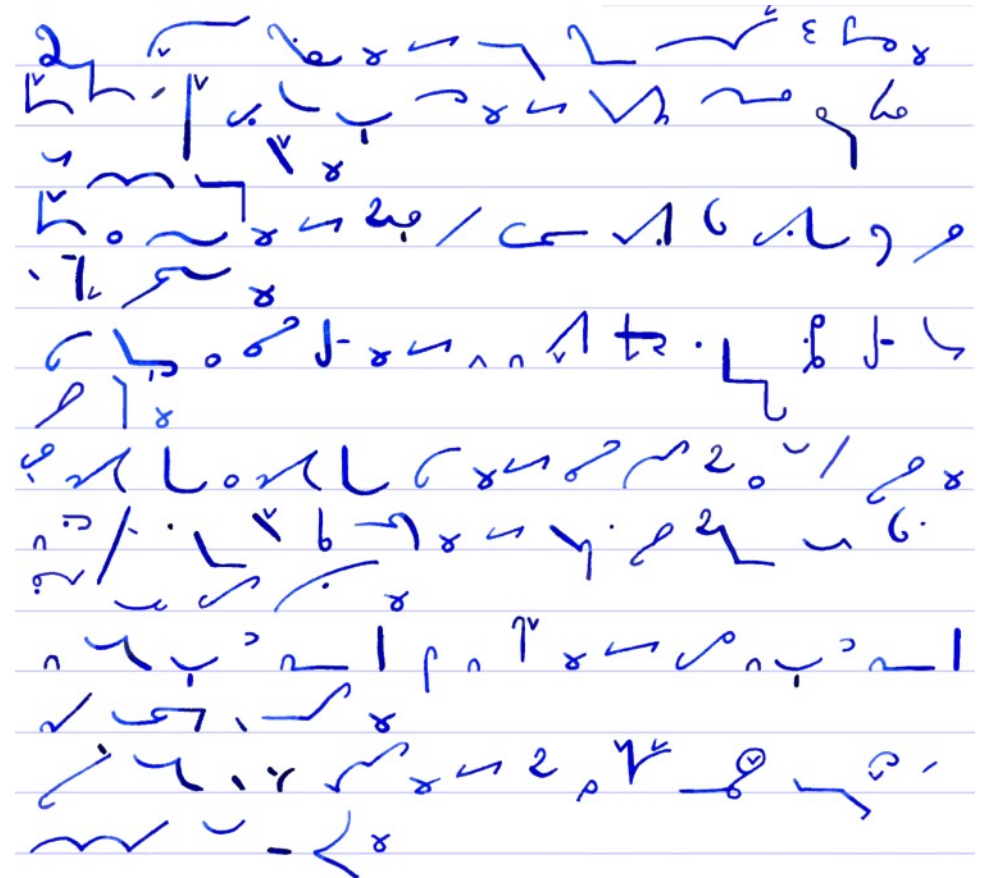
The proof of the pudding is in the eating. The proof of the shorthand is in the transcription.*

The race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong. Fast and careless loses the job or exam pass, check all your transcripts carefully.

* Omission phrase "in ord(er to)"

* "through" Keep the Ith well curved, as it could look similar to "during"

* "tra(n)sc(r)ription" Omits the N and the second R. Compare this with "descriptions" which uses a reversed circle to suggest the R hook.



Proverbs Reclaimed

There is no time like the present. Keep practice material with you at all times.

Time and tide wait for no man. Pursue maximum speed achievements, not the minimum to get by.

Time is money. Shorthand notes are quicker to read than wading through hours of audio recording.

Well begun is half done. How you write at the beginning of a dictation sets the tone for the rest of it.

What's worth doing is worth doing well. Half learned shorthand is not much use.

You can't judge a book by its cover. Better a used shorthand book now than a smart new one later.

You never know what you can do till you try. Once you know what you can do, you are encouraged to carry on.

You're never too old to learn. Shorthand is the ideal exercise to keep the mind and memory in good shape. (1249 words)